

15/07/2004

Obituary

By Aniza Damis

IN THE short 69 years he lived, Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin, Chairman of Petronas and Malaysia Airlines, dedicated 44 years to his country.

The last 24 hours before his sudden death yesterday, Azizan spent in meetings; one with Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop to discuss matters concerning Putrajaya Corporation, the developer of the federal administrative capital, of which Azizan was also chairman.

Azizan has been described as having been instrumental in the success of Petronas, the world's most profitable oil company, as well as to the positive turnaround of Malaysia Airlines.

Born in Penang on May 28, 1935, Azizan received his early schooling at two of Penang's most illustrious educational institutions, Francis Light School and Penang Free School, before going on to study at the University of Malaya in Singapore.

He joined the Malaysian Civil Service as an Assistant Secretary in the Education Ministry in 1960, moving to the Prime Minister's Department five years later, and becoming Principal Assistant Secretary (Security and Intelligence) in the Home Ministry in 1967.

He was National Security Council Secretary from 1969 to 1971.

He served as Principal Private Secretary to three Prime Ministers: Tun Abdul Razak (1971-1975), Tun Hussein Onn (1975-1981) and Dr Mahathir Mohamad (now Tun) from 1981 until 1984.

Azizan was Secretary-General in the Ministries of Trade and Industry (1984-1985) and Home (1985-1988).

In 1988, after 28 years in the civil service, Azizan was appointed President and Chief Executive of Petronas, taking over from Tan Sri Abdullah Mohamed Salleh.

On February 10, 1995, he was made chairman.

Six years later, in 2001, Azizan took on the chairmanship of Malaysia Airlines Berhad.

His final appointment was as a commissioner of the newly formed Royal Commission on the Police Force, early this year.

Besides his involvement in the civil service and public sector, Azizan also served as chairman of various renowned private corporations, including Petronas Carigali, Malaysia LNG, MTBE Malaysia, Petronas Refinery (Malacca), Petronas Kuala Lumpur City Centre Berhad (KLCCB), and KLCC (Holdings) Berhad.

He was also a director of Bank Bumiputra Malaysia Berhad.

In among all this, Azizan took a number of development and management courses at Oxford University (1965) and the Royal College of Defence Studies (1973) in the United Kingdom, and at Harvard Business School in the United States (1983).

He received honorary doctorates from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, and Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, and was bestowed with three honours by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, and several others by the States of Penang, Malacca, Sarawak.

In 2003, the French Government conferred on him the Order of the Commander of the Legion of Honour, one of the most prestigious French awards and the country's highest civilian honour.

Azizan was also chairman of the Malaysia-USA Business Council, Asean-Canada Business Council, and president of the Malaysian Petroleum Club, Malaysian Oil Company Berhad, and member of the East Asia Committee of

Lloyd's Register, and the National Information Technology Council (NITC).
(END)